



Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund Pilot *Lehigh County, PA*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

Lehigh County is part of the Lehigh Valley region of Pennsylvania. Since the mid-1700s, the Lehigh Valley region has engaged in a wide range of economic activities. Agriculture, mining, iron production, steel making, textile production, and the slate and cement industry activities have contributed to the local economy. Economic cycles and industry downturns over the years have led to massive lay-offs and site abandonment. The county's overall poverty rate is seven percent. Poverty in the Borough of Slatington, which encompasses 1.34 square miles and six brownfields, reaches almost 15 percent. Over 75 potential redevelopment sites in 30 municipalities, totaling 1,100 acres, have been identified and targeted for brownfields redevelopment. The Lehigh County has been a collaborative partner in the Northampton County Brownfields Assessment Pilot. Assessments at brownfield properties have been conducted under the pilot in Lehigh County.

BCRLF OBJECTIVES

Lehigh's BCRLF goals are to:

- Revitalize underutilized properties while protecting the environment;

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Lehigh County, Pennsylvania

Date of Announcement:
July 2000

Amount: \$500,000

BCRLF Target Area:
Lehigh County

Contacts:

Lehigh County Department
of Development
(610) 782-3001

Region 3 BCRLF
Coordinator
(215) 814-3211

Visit the EPA Region 3 Brownfields web site at:
www.epa.gov/region03/waste/brown/index.htm

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

- Revitalize the tax base;

- Provide a business-friendly environment and resident input into community development;
- Create viable development that discourages sprawl; and
- Promote the preservation of greenspace.

Many of the identified sites are located in State of Pennsylvania Keystone Opportunity Zones and Enterprise Zones.

FUND STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

The Lehigh County Department of Development will act as lead agency. A site manager and fund manager will be designated. The County expects to provide loans in amounts ranging from \$100,000 to \$200,000 and with loan terms of between two and seven years.

LEVERAGING OTHER RESOURCES

Since many of the identified brownfields sites in Lehigh County are located in Keystone Opportunity Zones and the Enterprise Zone, the Lehigh BCRLF will be used in conjunction with these special designations to allow a variety of tax abatement applications. The Pilot also will leverage the County's support to secure additional funding from private sources, including corporations and foundations. One additional anticipated source of funding will be from existing funds available from Northampton County's EPA Brownfields Pilot Project grant fund that can be used for site assessment activities. The County also has partnerships with local banking and lending institutions, so if adequate funding is not available from the above sources, the local banks and lenders will be able to provide financial support.

Use of BCRLF Pilot funds must be in accordance with CERCLA, and all CERCLA restrictions on use of funding also apply to BCRLF funds.
